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ABSTRACT

This book interprets the postwar rise of American elite universities to global research leadership, emphasizing the distinctive features of American higher education including: decentralized administration; a large and pluralistic market of public and private institutions; and intense competition for students, faculty, and research funding from federal agencies. The methodology employed moves beyond traditional rating methods and instead uses an empirical analysis of faculty productivity. Faculty research achievements at more than 200 institutions are measured across academic fields and in per capita terms. The book identifies 50 leading research universities, including 32 not previously top-ranked in national surveys and excludes 12 that hold membership in the Association of American Universities. Six chapters examine: the origins of the American research university, the revolution in federal science policy in the immediate postwar years, the "golden decade" of the 1960s, a stagnant decade in the 1970s, and the revival of federal funding and research in the 1980s. Two chapters which discuss public research universities, private research universities, and the rising institutions are based upon the Carnegie Commission's 1987 universe of 213 doctorate-granting universities. Two appendixes provide institutional data for 203 research universities and per capita scores. Notes on methodology and sources follow. (Contains 500 reference notes.) (CH)

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